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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 11 of resolution 53/1 M of 8 December 1998, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures for the implementation of that resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. It is a review of the current situation in Somalia, detailing humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners from August 1998 to July 1999.

II. The socio-economic situation

2. Somalia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Internal armed conflict and natural disasters continue to blight the population, especially in the central and southern regions, where armed violence has seriously undermined household food security and caused the displacement of thousands of families to urban centres and across borders into neighbouring countries. Natural disasters, such as flood, drought and epidemics, have also impacted negatively on the populations living in those regions. Conversely, natural disasters had a much smaller impact in areas of relatively good governance, particularly in northern regions, where local communities have created an environment of relative peace and stability, including mechanisms to address natural disasters. To support their fragile emerging administrations, these areas deserve, as the Secretary-General observed in May 1998, to reap a "peace dividend" through international assistance for their rehabilitation and development efforts.

A. Southern and central Somalia

3. Southern and central Somalia are the worst-affected areas of the country. The overall situation has been deteriorating since mid-1998. The 1997-1998 floods, which affected the lives of over one million Somalis, were followed by a severe drought and intensified armed conflict. The widespread destruction and neglect of socio-economic infrastructures, the collapse of the banana export industry in southern Somalia and the worsening security situation in the Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions have compounded the stress on economically marginal communities, subsistence farmers and pastoralists. The impact of the ban imposed by Saudi Arabia on livestock imports from the region, only lifted in mid-May this year, also affected all of the region's pastoralists.

4. All these negative factors have seriously impacted on the population. Unusual population displacements had begun by November 1998, when sedentary farmer households began to move from the worst hit drought regions of Bay and Bakool (normally the "breadbasket" of Somalia) to urban areas in search of food, water and better security. Over 40,000 persons moved to Gedo, Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba and to Mogadishu. The nutritional status of these displaced people is still poor and they are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of communicable diseases, such as measles, diarrhoea and cholera. Malaria is also common.

5. Armed conflict has also had a direct impact on the population. Civilians have been caught up in violent clashes, resulting in casualties and widespread displacement. The conflict has also affected vital trade routes and access to agricultural land. On 6 June 1999, militias of the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) regained control of the town of Baidoa, which had been occupied by the forces of General Hussein Aideed since September 1995. In a related move, on 11 June, the town of Kismayo was taken by an alliance of dissatisfied factions, including the Somali National Front (SNF) and the Somali National Alliance (SNA). These actions, combined with recurrent arms shipments into the country, have dramatically changed the political, security and humanitarian map of southern and central Somalia.

6. Current estimates for the summer harvest (the *gu*), which normally provides 75 to 80 per cent of the country's annual production, raise serious concerns. The inter-agency Food Security Assessment Unit issued an early warning on 16 June, predicting a poor harvest and the likelihood of large-scale vulnerability for most of the population in the southern and central regions. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also estimated that more than one million people would face serious food shortages, with over 400,000 at risk of starvation. The affected population would include 730,000 in Bay, Bakool and Gedo, 83,000 in Hiran, 193,000 in Lower Shabelle, and 160,000 in Lower Juba. These figures do not include a rough estimate of 300,000 persons displaced since the end of 1992 and living in unsatisfactory conditions in Mogadishu and other towns in the region.

7. Erratic rainfall, poor crop yield, shortage of pasture for livestock, disruption of trade routes, increase in food import prices and general insecurity are all interrelated factors undermining food security of vulnerable groups in central and southern Somalia. Other factors compounding vulnerability include the poor condition of livestock, the

infusion of additional currency (resulting in spiralling inflation) and fuel shortages, which recently caused a five-fold increase in its prices. It is estimated that the area currently under cultivation for cereal crops is 14 per cent smaller than the post-war average. Given that three quarters of the cultivated area is dependent on rainfall, insufficient rains inevitably result in a drastic crop reduction. Furthermore, it is expected that the harvest results will be uneven geographically and in some areas, such as Bay and Bakool, the yield will be significantly lower. On 6 July, in response to these worsening conditions, the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB), comprising donors, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs launched a donor alert for US$ 17.5 million, covering the period from 1 July to 31 December 1999.

B. North-eastern Somalia

8. Since 1992, a large number of returnees and displaced people originally from north-eastern Somalia have resettled in the area also known as "Puntland". Although the influx of the new returnees stretched the limited resources of the zone, they also brought expertise needed in different areas of the economy. This has helped major towns to experience a relative boom in some economic sectors in the past few years. The local administration, established in mid-1998, has been actively involved in promoting rehabilitation as well as emergency responses to the drought crisis in the area. External agencies have had a mixed record of cooperation with the new administration, though actively seeking to support the improvement of its technical capacities. The local economy is based on three main sectors: livestock trade (accounting for about 70 per cent of the formal economy), fisheries and revenues from the port of Bossaso. The recent lifting of the Saudi Arabian ban on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa has resulted in a resurgence of livestock exports, although many over-stocked herds had already dwindled owing to the drought that killed a large number of livestock in the north-east earlier in 1999.

9. There are no perennial rivers in the region; the pastoral population is therefore heavily dependent on sporadic rainfall. Unfortunately, for the past two years, seasonal rains have failed in much of north-eastern Somalia. By November 1998, some areas, such as Mudug, Nugal and Sool, were suffering from a severe lack of water. Early in 1999, local communities, with support from aid agencies and the Somali diaspora, commenced limited emergency interventions, such as water trucking. In April, while the administration in the north-east declared a state of emergency, the United Nations issued a donor alert simultaneously with an appeal launched by SACB. By early May 1999, the situation had seriously deteriorated and the effects of the drought had extended to the whole region, affecting about 100,000 people. The result was a 50 per cent reduction in livestock in some areas and large-scale population movements, as nomadic communities had to search for water and pasture for their animals. This, in turn, resulted in an increase in water prices and overexploitation of pastures. Limited rainfall and the lifting of the livestock ban by Saudi Arabia reduced some of the stress on pastoral communities, though there is still a considerable need for rehabilitation work and disaster preparedness.

C. North-western Somalia

10. The region is relatively stable; international interventions and support are therefore mainly aimed at rehabilitation and development. However, there remain pockets of vulnerability, such as sedentary farming communities in Gabiley and Borama, which are affected by the drought and require international assistance. The north-west was also affected by the livestock ban, which impacted both the economy and the local administration, as most of its tax revenues accrue from export taxes on livestock shipments. In June 1998, local authorities, in collaboration with SACB, formulated a relief package for the local administration, in order to ease the impact of the livestock ban. Furthermore, support in the region is still needed to assist the resettlement and reintegration of Somali returnees.

III. The United Nations common humanitarian action plan

11. United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and many international and national NGOs have undertaken emergency interventions to assist at-risk communities in Somalia. Aid agencies are providing humanitarian aid throughout the country, adapting the assistance they deliver to the markedly different needs and operating environments of each region. In order to pursue a well-coordinated response, the consolidated appeal process has been adopted. This allows for a systematic, holistic and prioritized approach to addressing the continuing crisis in the southern and central parts of Somalia, while the rehabilitation needs in the

relatively stable northern regions are being met. In other words, this approach integrates an overall vision for relief with rehabilitation and development.

12. The United Nations launched the 1999 consolidated inter-agency appeal for Somalia, soliciting $65,661,916 for the period from January to December 1999, in December 1998. Based on joint inter-agency analyses and projections, priority issues are being addressed to achieve the overall goal of saving lives and providing a future to the population of Somalia, currently estimated at over 6 million, as described in the appeal's humanitarian action plan. The diminished funding available has been a major constraint facing the humanitarian activities in the country. By mid-July 1999, about 34 per cent of the funds solicited in the consolidated appeal process had been collected. The pattern of donor contributions during the years following the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) has been one of substantial generosity for life-saving humanitarian relief operations and for repatriation of refugees. In contrast, contributions for rehabilitation, recovery, capacity-building for new local administrations and reintegration of returnees have been generally modest. The United Nations and its partners are doing their utmost to convince donors of the wisdom of making long-term commitments to rehabilitation and recovery activities, which would surely help to accelerate the spread of stability and peace throughout Somalia.

13. The main objectives outlined in the 1999 consolidated appeal process are to prevent the current humanitarian emergency situation in southern and central Somalia from developing into a dramatic famine, and to continue to foster stability, self-reliance and security in the north. In order to meet these objectives, the United Nations has adopted a number of sectoral interventions in the following areas: emergency response, food security, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and rehabilitation of infrastructure, public administration and institutional capacity-building. United Nations agencies also engage in a number of integrated, cross-sectoral activities; these include the resettlement and integration of returnees and displaced communities, the promotion and protection of human rights as well as the issue of inter-agency planning and coordination.

14. Persistent inter-factional conflicts and associated insecurity constitute the main constraints to implementing the humanitarian programme in disaster-prone central and southern Somalia. Lack of central authority and disrespect for the rule of law have all hindered access to vulnerable populations. The operating environment for humanitarian agencies working in Somalia is therefore dangerous and insecure. The United Nations continues to work closely with SACB on this matter. The security management team, chaired by the United Nations designated official, is supported by a total of seven United Nations professional security officers, who serve the United Nations as a whole. A United Nations security officer is posted in each United Nations operational area.

15. Attacks on aid agency personnel have been chronic and deliberate, particularly in central and southern Somalia. In January 1999, a veterinarian working for the international NGO Terra Nuova was killed near Bardera. In March 1999, a member of the United Methodist Church was killed in the Ras Kyamboni area of southern Somalia. In April 1999, another veterinarian working for Terra Nuova was taken hostage for three weeks near Afmadow, in Lower Juba. In late April 1999, humanitarian agencies recommended the immediate withdrawal of expatriate staff working in Lower Shabelle, following a series of security incidents. United Nations international personnel in Bardera were relocated following a security incident in which an international staff member of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sustained knee injuries. In June 1999, food distributions by the World Food Programme and the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE) had to slow down, as factional fighting continued and the principal towns of Baidoa and Kismayo changed hands between rival militiamen. On 11 June, militiamen took over the offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kismayo. The NGO Médecins sans Frontières which operates the main hospital in Kismayo, had to relocate its staff because of the fighting.

IV. United Nations assistance to Somalia

A. Emergency response

16. The rehabilitation phase of the relief operations launched following the massive flood emergency of 1997/98 had been poorly funded and could therefore not achieve most of its aims, thus leaving the capacity to cope seriously weakened. As a consequence, the poor results of the 1998 main cereal harvest brought about a significant food gap, and by October 1998 there was widespread and severe food insecurity in central and southern Somalia. United Nations agencies and NGOs therefore mounted a large cross-border operation to address the crisis, delivering urgently needed humanitarian supplies, including food aid, medicines and shelter.

17. By June 1999, 19,800 tons of food commodities had been distributed by WFP and other partners, benefiting about 1.3 million flood and drought victims and vulnerable households in Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Hiran, Middle Juba and Middle and Lower Shabelle through emergency relief assistance, food-for-work and support to social institutions. UNICEF, together with NGOs, distributed over 2,600 tons of Supermix, benefiting nearly 200,000 children; some 90,000 children were vaccinated against measles and received vitamin A supplements and approximately 100,000 people were given access to water through the rehabilitation of 27 water sources in Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Middle Shabelle and Hiran. In addition, ICRC provided 10,000 displaced families from Bay and Bakool and 6,000 displaced by fighting in Sakow (Middle Juba) with shelter materials and household kits. In north-eastern Somalia, United Nations agencies, ICRC and NGOs, such as Diakonia, Médecins sans Frontieres Holland, Action contre la Faim and Norwegian People's Aid, responded to the drought emergency with water and food distribution as well as rehabilitation and construction of boreholes and rain water catchments. This included an average of 700 trucks per week provided by ICRC for emergency water distribution to 10,000 nomadic families in Mudug, Nugal and Galgudud.

B. Food security and development of livelihoods

18. As a consequence of the 1997/98 floods and the prolonged drought that followed, rural communities in southern and central Somalia were plunged into absolute poverty. The persistent insecurity and the lack of funding did not permit aid agencies to provide long-term interventions aimed at restoring the basic livelihood assets of affected households. Humanitarian agencies, however, have been quite successful in their distribution of food aid, despite the prevailing insecurity. They have also promoted food-for-work projects assisting 21,000 households in Middle Shabelle, Hiran, Lower Shabelle, Garbahare (Gedo) and in the north-west.

19. The main objective of the food programme in Somalia is centred on enhancing the coping mechanisms of seasonally food-insecure populations and to ensure a minimum nutritional standard for the chronically food-insecure populations. Food-for-work interventions create seasonal employment opportunities, mainly for vulnerable farming households, and support the rehabilitation of productive assets, such as irrigation canals, rain water catchments, essential farm-to-market roads, water wells, river embankments and small bridges, as well as the preparation of additional agricultural lands and the rehabilitation of shelter units. The adoption of an extensive network of field monitors and a community-based approach in all stages of the programme, with a strong focus on participation, has proven essential for the programme's successful implementation.

20. WFP Somalia recently commissioned a nutritional and market analysis study in order to obtain further information on the impact and effect of emergency food aid distribution from November 1998 to June 1999. The study also involved FSAU, the Famine Early Warning System of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNICEF. Preliminary findings confirm that timely food assistance averted large-scale population movements and famine in the drought-affected areas in Bay, Bakool and Gedo. In an environment of constant insecurity and recurrent warfare, the WFP contracting system with the private sector (Somali transporters) proved efficient and ensured that the neediest were reached at the village level. The continual distribution of emergency food rations resulted in stabilizing market prices of basic food commodities and helped to ensure affordable food access for the poor. FSAU continues to monitor agricultural production, food availability, market prices, the nutritional status of the population and other factors affecting the food security situation in Somalia. Its reports have given the aid community relevant information and analysis concerning food security, thereby facilitating timely interventions.

21. United Nations agencies and NGOs completed a major seed distribution for the *gu* 1999 planting season. Under the coordination of FAO, over 1,700 tons of seeds were distributed to farmers of Bay and Bakool. ICRC distributed sorghum and cow pea seeds to over 30,000 farming families in the two river valleys of Juba and Shabelle. A project by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Volunteers in Hiran has diversified and expanded crop production, increased rural employment and improved investment opportunities. Through FAO-funded emergency assistance, 81 tons of grain seeds were delivered to flood-affected farmers in Middle Shabelle. In addition, high-yielding sorghum seed varieties were tested in different locations of southern Somalia: the results were very positive. With assistance provided by the Government of Sweden and in cooperation with WFP, FAO delivered 560 tons of sorghum seeds to 75,000 vulnerable and drought-affected farming households in the rain-fed areas of Bay, Bakool and Middle Shabelle. An NGO consortium implemented the activities, with the coordination and technical support of FAO.

22. FAO has continued to support the work of FSAU by providing assistance to improve the reliability and usefulness of data for crop forecasting and assessment, nutrition and livestock marketing. This support will continue throughout 1999. FAO has also continued to work in establishing a common approach in river, canal and irrigation rehabilitation projects in partnership with SACB. Efforts to improve and maintain confidence in the quality and safety of Somali livestock exports through improved surveillance and diagnosis of the Rift Valley fever by FAO will continue if donor funding is made available. FAO will also coordinate its activities through the SACB Livestock Working Group and other partners.

C. Health and nutrition

23. The leading causes of death in Somalia are infectious diseases, including respiratory infections, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and malaria, often aggravated by poor nutrition. Children are particularly vulnerable. Women are also at high risk. Maternal mortality in Somalia, for example, is among the highest in the world, given the limited development of reproductive health services, including contraception and adequate medical care associated with pregnancy and childbearing. The health of the population is further constrained by low immunization coverage, poor water and sanitation conditions and limited access to health services.

24. In the relatively insecure areas of central and southern Somalia, emergency health and nutrition work has suffered serious setbacks because of substantial reduction of aid. As a result, a number of NGOs supporting health programmes in southern Somalia have been forced to close down their operations, leaving UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) with very few partners through whom to deliver essential health services. The regions affected by the withdrawal of NGOs are those in Benadir, Middle Shabelle and Lower Juba. In an attempt to fill the gap, UNICEF entered into partnership with over 20 local community-based organizations and local health authorities as of June 1999. WHO is adopting about 60 villages in Lower Shabelle under a "basic needs" programme, in partnership with local communities. The new form of partnership has enabled UNICEF to ensure at least immunization services in remote districts. It has also helped to strengthen community ownership of the programme. Nevertheless, many nomadic and rural populations remain seriously under-served.

25. United Nations agencies provide support to nearly 600 health facilities throughout the country by supplying essential drugs and equipment, training health professionals and traditional birth attendants and developing standards and operational guidelines. In November 1998, UNICEF, in conjunction with WHO and NGOs, initiated measles immunization and provision of vitamin A in Bay and Bakool. By the end of May 1999, over 120,000 children had been immunized and provided with vitamin A capsules. In the past year, over 900,000 children have been reached by a national polio eradication campaign and a system of acute flaccid paralysis surveillance has been set up by WHO in the north.

26. Cholera is endemic in Somalia, especially in main cities, with outbreaks occurring annually from December to May. By early May 1999, a total of 7,860 cases with 233 deaths had been reported since the beginning of the epidemic outbreak in December 1998. Assistance from WHO focused on monitoring and providing assistance to treatment centres in order to maximize the quality of case management, while UNICEF paid particular attention to the provision of supplies for cholera treatment, including chlorine for water purification. By June 1999, the problem had stabilized, with some pockets of severe diarrhoea-like diseases still reported in some parts of the south and in Mudug.

27. Malaria is also a major health problem in most of the rain-fed areas. UNICEF distributed malaria kits (including drugs and mosquito nets) in late 1998 and provided technical assistance by supporting ongoing malaria training workshops for health workers in central and southern Somalia. WHO has supported initiatives to breed special fish that eat mosquito larvae found in stagnant waters; it has also established a malaria reference centre in Hargeisa for related training and monitoring.

28. In 1999, WHO appointed a full-time tuberculosis coordinator to provide technical support and supply of drugs in tuberculosis control. Satisfactory results were achieved this year, with 53 per cent direct observed therapy coverage, and 13 tuberculosis centres functioning in 10 out of 18 regions in the country. The direct observed therapy programme has achieved cure rates of 84 per cent and success rates of 90 per cent.

29. As part of efforts to reduce the very high maternal mortality rate in Somalia, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, UNICEF, CARE and the International Planned Parenthood Federation are implementing a reproductive health-care programme for safe motherhood. The emphasis of the programme is on increasing access to services and strengthening the skills training of the health cadres. In this regard, progress has been particularly encouraging in the north.

30. Malnutrition continues to be pervasive in vulnerable communities. UNICEF, WHO and NGOs support a total of 134 mother and child health-care centres throughout Somalia, providing mothers and children with basic health and nutrition services, including vitamin and iron folic acid supplements. Support is also given to 83 outpatient dispensaries, 20 hospitals and over 700 community health workers, including 34 supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres. WFP supports health services by providing food rations to workers in primary health-care facilities and hospitals. ICRC continued to support hospitals and clinics in Mogadishu, Galgudud, Mudug, Hiran, and Lower Juba. WHO provides technical and laboratory support and training for health cadres. Available throughout urban areas is also a large, but professionally problematic, private sector, which offers over-the-counter medicines and curative services.

31. In the north, UNICEF has worked with health authorities to introduce more efficient management systems through increased participation of users. In the north-west, the local authorities are drafting a health policy that includes specific guidelines and management tools. User charges and community management have been introduced on a pilot basis. Similar strategies are being developed by the authorities in the north-east.

D. Water and sanitation

32. The priority in the water sector is to increase access to drinking water and sustain past investment in water systems. This includes building local capacity, improving water management and introducing cost-sharing schemes. In this regard, UNICEF and NGOs are building on private initiatives, promoting and supporting a mix of public and private approaches to the management of water systems.

33. During the past year, United Nations agencies have been involved in drought mitigation and in cholera response. UNICEF and its NGO partners rehabilitated many water sources and trucked safe water to 11 camps for displaced persons in the Gedo region, completed four bore wells in Hiran (thus benefiting 32,000 people) and two bore wells in Middle Shabelle, serving 16,000 people. In Mudug, Nugal and Galgudud, ICRC has provided water to 205 locations and rehabilitated *berkeds* and shallow wells in the north-east and in Lower Shabelle. In Bossaso, the main town in the north-east, humanitarian agencies are implementing a more development-oriented approach. Four boreholes have been drilled and equipped and a semi-reticulated water supply system will be installed later in 1999, connecting a system of several standpoints in town.

E. Education

34. Fewer than one in five children of school age are in school, and most of those attending are in relatively peaceful urban areas. Increasing enrolment is taking root in the north of Somalia, but not in the more populous central and southern areas. In the past year, the issues of quality of teaching and sustainability of education have been addressed. The absence of a central educational authority in Somalia has led to inconsistency in educational standards, including curricula and textbooks of acceptable quality.

35. UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have taken major steps in the last two years to support local educational authorities in the development of standardized curricula, syllabuses, textbooks, teachers' guides and other educational materials. In the north-west, a curriculum development centre was established with UNICEF support in order to improve the quality of educational materials. The centre has prepared key materials: syllabuses for grades one to eight and lower primary text-writing for all subjects (for example, Somali, mathematics, general sciences, social studies, Islamic studies, Arabic and English). UNESCO and UNICEF have successfully promoted a parallel process of educational standardization for the north-east and the rest of Somalia.

36. UNESCO currently chairs the SACB Education Sectoral Committee, which promotes coordination between education sector donors, United Nations agencies and NGOs. The committee has been successful in promoting standard work norms and universally accepted standards for syllabuses and textbooks. UNESCO also contributes to the improvement of women's access to conflict resolution and peace-building and to the building of the capacity of local NGOs with respect to women's rights. One of the main project activities of UNESCO is focused on the community mobilization and on the promotion of community ownership of schools in Nugal (north-east). Community education committees have been created to implement these projects. In addition, UNESCO works with UNHCR in providing educational services to Somali refugee populations throughout the region.

37. The United Nations in Somalia is also promoting non-formal education through a number of initiatives. UNESCO implements the UNDP-funded project on civic education for peace and good governance, which disseminates information through both the radio and a magazine. UNICEF has developed and distributed 15,000 copies of a children's workbook on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *The Wishing Book* is an interactive, full colour, photographic

workbook in Somali about Somali children, distributed through schools and local grass-roots organizations. A number of other agencies are also involved in vocational training, particularly in the northern regions.

F. Infrastructure, public administration and institutional capacity-building

38. United Nations agencies continue to support the following: rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure; capacity-building; training and implementation of sustainable community-based activities for the support of local coping mechanisms. In this regard, UNDP, together with a number of United Nations agencies, plays a leading role in supporting recovery and early development interventions.

39. The UNDP Programme Strategy for Somalia focuses on good governance and peace-building and is implemented through three subprogrammes. The first, empowerment of civil society and administrative structures, includes the Somalia civil protection programme, the war-torn societies project and the civic education for peace and good governance programme and the partners in development programme. The second, focused on economic recovery, includes the civil aviation caretaker authority for Somalia, the ports and trade efficiency, the United Nations Development Office for Somalia (UNDOS), the assistance to small-scale farming for agricultural development and the private sector initiative. Finally, the subprogramme on capacity-building for rehabilitation and reintegration includes the Somalia rehabilitation programme, the urban settlements, governance and management programme and the reintegration programme.

40. UNDOS, executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services, focuses on strengthening the planning and management capacities of local and regional administrative structures in Somalia. Its goal is to promote systems and structures that can be easily harmonized in the event of the creation of a national government. Other core activities of UNDOS currently include an important cartography capacity, economic planning and policy analysis, development of a statistical database and maintenance of a documentation unit on Somalia. UNDOS also provides SACB with secretariat support as well as an Internet Web site (www.undos.org).

41. Through a district-level approach, the Somalia rehabilitation programme, executed through the United Nations Office for Project Services, assists communities to build their self-reliance capabilities and to meet their basic minimum needs. The project provides technical assistance and small investment capital. Under this programme, 67 small-scale projects are currently under implementation in close collaboration with the target communities. The programme primarily focuses on the areas of employment generation and infrastructure rehabilitation. Over the past year, the programme has made an important change in programme strategy, moving away from direct intervention to working through district administrations. A participatory planning and decision-making process will therefore be institutionalized.

42. A programme to offer support to Somalia's private sector has recently been initiated by UNDP, which in May 1998 hosted a workshop on "Trade and private sector development in Somalia" in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to discuss strategies to revitalize the private sector in the country. The programme, with the technical advice of the International Labour Organization, will focus on trade promotion, the establishment of trade and business organizations and the organization and dissemination of trade information, covering the following sectors: telecommunications, trade financing, civil aviation, seaports and export of chilled meat.

43. UNDP and the International Civil Aviation Organization are building the capacity of local staff in the management of essential aviation facilities and services in the country. Training has been provided in air traffic control, aeronautical information services and other areas. The project has also upgraded the infrastructure of major airstrips in Hargeisa and Bossaso and assisted local authorities to develop airport revenue-generation systems.

44. The ports and trade project of UNDP is implemented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The project provides assistance in the rehabilitation and operation of Somali ports, which are vital for trade and employment opportunities. Under this project, port authorities in Berbera and Bossaso have been established and technical assistance, training and equipment have been provided. As a result, both ports have increased their operating efficiency. Nevertheless, there are still some critical unmet needs, mainly in terms of further training, basic equipment for port operations, technical assistance to improve revenue collection and port safety equipment.

45. The urban settlements, governance and management programme of UNDP is implemented by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), primarily in the municipal governments of Berbera, Boroma, Burao and Gabiley (north-west). The programme has four main

objectives: (a) to restore and strengthen urban governance through the enhancement of the municipal institutional capacity to plan, manage and maintain municipal infrastructure and public services; (b) to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to undertake the reintegration and resettlement of returnees; (c) to strengthen their capacity to enhance emergency preparedness; and (d) to build their capacity to undertake the rehabilitation or reconstruction of infrastructure and public services. These include water supply, solid waste management and systems for property registration, such as land by-laws, building codes and guidelines and a framework for financial recording and reporting. The project also helps to set up monitoring systems and to generate job opportunities for female-headed households.

46. The Somali coastline is the longest one in Africa (3,300 km) and has a greater variety of marine and coastal ecosystems than any other western Indian Ocean State. In the absence of a national Government, however, there is no mechanism for the sustainable utilization and protection of Somali coastal resources. Since 1998, UNDP has funded assessments of the situation, which has resulted in the formulation of a multi-partner programme for the protection and sustainable management of marine resources. The implementation of this new initiative, the Global Environment Fund's strategic action plan for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, started this year with the recruitment of two coordinators based in Hargeisa and Bossaso.

47. Owing to the relatively peaceful and secure situation and the resulting economic activity, the northern regions were chosen as the initial sites for the war-torn societies project, which aims at facilitating the emergence of good governance. In the north-west, research began in January 1999 and tentative plans are currently under way for an extension of a modified version of the project to parts of southern and central Somalia. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has provided the project's Somalia programme team in the north with a gender expert.

48. In a measure to strengthen security mechanisms, UNDP has established the Somali civil protection and rehabilitation programme, which focuses on demining, law enforcement, police training and reintegration of ex-combatants. The local administration in the north-west (Berbera and Hargeisa), coupled with voluntary labour from the local police force, assisted the programme in the rehabilitation of the Mandera police training school, which was opened in October 1998. This project is also focusing on capacity-building for the local institutions engaged in mine clearance activities. In 1999, for example, mines laid in an area of 18 square kilometres were successfully removed from the town of Burao.

G. Reintegration of returnees and displaced communities

49. In Somalia, the main objectives of UNHCR are to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from countries of asylum and to ensure that returnees are reintegrated into their areas of origin through the provision of assistance to local communities in which returnees settle. Since 1988, well over one million Somalis have fled to other countries. As of mid-1999, there were about 197,000 registered Somali refugees in Ethiopia, 124,000 in Kenya, 40,000 in Yemen, 20,000 in Djibouti and a few thousand in countries such as Eritrea, the Sudan and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. UNHCR provides returnees with transport and repatriation packages consisting of a food ration, household items and a cash travel grant. Assistance provided by UNHCR, United Nations agencies and NGOs to areas of return includes the following: rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools, hospitals, clinics and water sources; assistance to farmers by providing seeds, tools and irrigation equipment; provision of training, especially to women and vulnerable groups; support for local administrations by providing equipment, furniture and rehabilitating premises. Since the majority of the returnees are women and children, UNHCR supports them by providing women with training and by implementing income-generating projects.

50. UNHCR is also implementing quick impact projects in the receiving communities, which ensure the smooth resettlement and reintegration of returnees. In Lower Juba, for example, the reintegration assistance provided by UNHCR included health, water and sanitation and income generation. In Badade and Raskiamboni, UNHCR rehabilitated water catchments and a health post, constructed latrines and provided women with grinding mills and locally constructed fishing boats. In the north-east, (Bossaso area) a mother and child health-care centre and a borehole were rehabilitated by UNHCR, which also provided for the extension of a girls' primary school in Garowe. Owing to civil unrest and recurrent food, water and health crises, the repatriation of refugees has not been possible in southern Somalia. Continued insecurity for both international aid agencies and the local partners has obstructed humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation activities and discouraged refugees in camps from returning to Somalia.

51. The establishment of a civil administration in the north-west has facilitated rehabilitation activities in key sectors of health, education, water supply, community services and agriculture. Subsequently, the organized voluntary repatriation of refugees from Ethiopia to north-western Somalia began in 1997; as of 24 June 1999, over 61,000 refugees had returned. In spite of the suspension of voluntary repatriation from Ethiopia by authorities in the north-west at the end of 1998, UNHCR continued to plan and implement more quick-impact projects in the region.

52. In spite of these positive developments, authorities have, on occasion, expressed concern over the inadequacy of the reintegration packages. In response to these concerns and to the need to achieve repatriation without undue delays, UNHCR, together with UNDP and other United Nations agencies and NGOs, has given strong support to an initiative of the local administration in the north-west aimed at preparing action plans. In early July 1999, a three-day workshop was organized with the goal of providing a framework for reintegration in the areas of return, and to link repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration with sustainable development throughout "Somaliland". Several donors have expressed a strong interest in this approach, which is also echoed in a regional approach for the whole Horn of Africa currently developed by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

H. Human rights and gender issues

53. Gender discrimination is deeply rooted in the traditional sociocultural structures of Somalia and remains a formidable barrier to women's participation in decision-making processes and to their access to resources. While women's influence in local or national political arenas has notably decreased since the beginning of the civil war, they face an even increased burden in terms of meeting the basic needs of their families and communities. UNICEF and UNIFEM have therefore initiated a joint project to promote women's participation in civil governance. A series of workshops designed to raise women's awareness on their rights and their role in governance were conducted in Hargeisa, Bossaso, Garowe, Galkaiyo, Jowhar and Merka. In 1998, an important symposium was held in the north-west as part of the efforts to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation. Increased enrolment of girls in school is also being promoted.

54. In order to promote an increased understanding of the rights of children, UNICEF has produced a workbook for children, in Somali, on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: *The Wishing Book*. To further increase awareness and sensitization on the condition of women in Somalia, UNIFEM has also published *Between Peace and War: Somali Women on the Eve of the 21st Century*. The book has been distributed to many women's groups. However, in order to reach a larger population, it is also being translated into the Somali language. Furthermore, in May 1999, UNICEF, with financial support from UNDP, also facilitated the participation of Somali women in the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference (12 to 15 May 1999).

I. Coordination and cross-sectoral planning

55. The chronic insecurity and instability, the absence of effective national counterparts, limited donor resources and the precarious humanitarian situation continue to present a challenge to the United Nations system and its partners. The United Nations Country Team, chaired by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and supported by the United Nations Coordination Unit, remains a useful coordination and information-exchange forum, in which joint assessments, strategies, programming and implementation are decided and managed. The United Nations Country Team is comprised of senior representatives of all United Nations agencies and organizations operating in the country, as well as the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, ICRC, IFRC and the International Organization for Migration.

56. The United Nations Coordination Unit, established within the UNDP country office, continues to play an important role in facilitating and strengthening coordination and collaboration within the United Nations system and SACB, especially by providing a wide range of information as well as logistical, organizational and analytical services. It also prepares a newsletter, the *Somalia Monitor*. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also continued to strengthen its coordination and support role. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has funded the recruitment of a humanitarian affairs adviser who recently joined the Unit, while also providing support from Headquarters in organizing regular donor consultations and launching donor alerts.

57. In Nairobi, the United Nations organizations dealing with Somalia actively coordinate with NGOs and donors within the framework of SACB. The SACB Consultative Committee is a monthly forum open to the general public in which updates on the current political, security and operational situation are provided. On the other hand, the SACB Executive Committee consults and makes

recommendations, strictly on the basis of consensus, concerning common political and security issues. It also works on building mutual understanding with donors regarding constraints, opportunities and the funding requirements of the United Nations and NGO operations in Somalia. The SACB Sectoral Committees, headed by a Steering Committee, discuss technical issues of common concern in the following sectors: health and nutrition, education, rural development, food security, water and sanitation, infrastructure and local administration.

58. To facilitate in-country coordination, the United Nations Country Team continues the practice of designating one United Nations agency official as its focal point in each area of operation within the country. The focal points are selected on a rotating basis from among the senior field representatives of the United Nations agencies in each operational area. The functions of the United Nations focal point include, *inter alia*, collecting and exchanging relevant information, facilitating joint decision-making among the United Nations agencies with regard to operational strategies, and liaising with local authorities.

59. In order to maintain a cohesive United Nations system and maximize the cost-effectiveness of the United Nations operation, several innovations have been introduced. The United Nations Common Air Service (UNCAS), common premises and shared communications and joint security services have been established, while WFP entered joint leasing arrangements with flight operators.

V. Assistance provided by Member States

60. In addition to the activities listed above, Member States have provided the following information on assistance to Somalia pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/1 M.

61. The Government of Finland assisted Somalia with 2.5 million markkaa in 1998, and with 2 million markkaa, through UNICEF, in 1999.

62. In 1998, the Government of France contributed 288,000 French francs to the NGO Action Contre la Faim for its nutritional programmes for children in Mogadishu. In 1999, FF 300,000 were allocated to UNDP for its campaign against famine in Somalia. The French committee for UNICEF also contributed FF 900,000 to assist the populations of Bakool. Moreover, Handicap International runs a readaptation centre in Hargeisa and a rural development project in Barbera; the two projects have an estimated value of FF 3 million.

63. In 1998, the special economic assistance given by the Government of Germany totalled 6,674,240 deutsche mark, including the following: DM 3,500,000 as a pledge for IGAD; DM 2,059,240 as a contribution for emergency humanitarian aid to WFP, UNHCR and NGOs; DM 845,000 for an environment rehabilitation programme and DM 270,000 for humanitarian mine sweeping. In 1999, contributions or pledges have amounted to DM 4,165,810, including DM 350,000 for food aid via NGOs; DM 2,037,810 for food aid via WFP; DM 700,000 for rehabilitation of irrigation systems; DM 700,000 for rehabilitation of the water supply system in Mogadishu; and DM 378,000 for a vocational training centre.

64. The Government of Norway has reported that, in 1998, contributions to Somalia totalled 24,747,520 kroner. For the current year, humanitarian assistance has been provided in the amount of NKR 21,388,922.

65. In 1998, the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance reported a total contribution of US$ 7,996,121, of which $2,853,527 were contributed to the relief of the victims of floods. In 1999, the assistance reported has totalled $1,904,853, of which $149,853 for a grant to CARE for seeds distributions in the Bay, $1,000,000 for a grant with UNICEF for air operation support through UNCAS to UNICEF and USAID implementing partners, and $755,000 for a grant to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency for a water/sanitation project in Hiran.

VI. Concluding observations

66. Insecurity remains a constant feature in large areas of Somalia and a significant obstacle to the provision of humanitarian assistance. This is particularly true in urban areas (Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa) and much of rural central and southern Somalia. However, despite the security threats and rising distribution costs caused by clan boundaries, checkpoints and mines, the United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners have been able to gain intermittent access to a significant proportion of the most affected areas, though often at great risk. For the foreseeable future, humanitarian organizations will carry out their activities on a flexible and pragmatic basis when security conditions permit. They will also continue to rely upon cross-border operations from Kenya. In this respect, the support of the Government of Kenya for humanitarian operations is most helpful and appreciated. Security management and monitoring remains a key component of the Somalia relief effort. Donors should therefore ensure that

additional resources are made available for improved security management in these areas.

67. Prospects for humanitarian, rehabilitation and development activities are more favourable in the north, owing to the presence of more international actors and stronger local administrative structures that are able to take responsibility for humanitarian needs. Donors should therefore consider longer-term investments for general socio-economic and governance capacity-building. Such investments will develop local capacities, reduce external dependencies, allow for resettlement and reintegration of returnees and increase the local administration's ability to assist its population in coping with recurrent natural disasters.

68. Sudden humanitarian emergencies in Somalia have been met by a substantial response from the donor community. However, the decline in general donor support has resulted in the loss of operational capacity. For example, a major finding of the evaluation exercise of the international emergency response to the 1997/98 floods was that resources were not made available during the post-flood phase to ensure the rehabilitation of water sources and the irrigation infrastructure. In this respect, much effort has been invested in building a combined humanitarian relief and early development strategy, as reflected in the United Nations consolidated appeal for 1999. However, the response to the appeal has been inadequate, which may seriously weaken the capacity of the United Nations agencies to provide a timely and effective response to humanitarian crises. Donor Governments are therefore encouraged to provide sufficient funding for these essential programmes.

69. Somalia remains in a fragile state where, until comprehensive political, governance and security issues are addressed, humanitarian and development actors will continue to operate in difficult circumstances. The strategy for the immediate future foresees continued support of progress in northern areas, while simultaneously addressing basic humanitarian needs in the south. Donor Governments should therefore ensure that emergency as well as medium-term rehabilitation and early development needs are adequately addressed. The international community's financial and moral support for these activities, as well as general support for reconciliation efforts, will be essential to meeting both immediate needs and the resolution of Somalia's larger political crisis.